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INFORMATION

SECRET

June 12, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: John H. Holdridge

SUBJECT: VC/NVA Promises to Cede Part of Cambodia to Laos

You may find the attached intelligence report of interest (Tab A). It cites a Cambodian major who was caught behind the enemy lines as reporting that the VC/NVA in North Cambodia has been telling the local folk that Stung Treng and Ratanakiri provinces would be ceded to Laos.

CIA believes that this report is probably true. The area is inhabited mostly by Lao or tribal peoples who always resented the transfer of the area to Cambodia by the French provincial administration. Cambodian Communists have used this irredentist theme in the past.

CIA also estimates that the Communists are likely to attempt to establish a base area in Siem Reap and Battambang provinces in Western Cambodia. There are many Vietnamese residents (mostly fishermen around the Tonle Sap).

There are also ethnic Lao from Northern Cambodia whom Sihanouk resettled in Battambang province. By playing the irredentist theme among these settlers, and by allowing those who wished to return to the Stung Treng area, the Communists may believe that they could generate support for themselves.

The speculation sounds reasonable enough to be worth keeping in mind.

Attachment

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